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AUTHOR Wolff, Robert Paul
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ABSTRACT

This book, originally published in 1969, presents a comprehensive analysis of the rationale, principles, and presuppositions that make contemporary universities what they are. It proposes that literature, art, and philosophy embody a promise of gratification that engenders a negative critique of the social and cultural status quo, and that the rationale for the liberal arts university is society's need for a reservoir of critical thinking that is the motor of social, economic, and political progress. The book begins with four carefully delineated models of a university. After analyzing such controversial issues as the role of grading in the university and the "myth" of value neutrality, the writer turns to the question of how the university should be governed. He argues for a radical reconstruction based on a "social contract" that would place ultimate authority in the hands of the faculty and students. The book concludes with a series of "practical proposals for utopian reform," including such provocative recommendations as a variable-length, ungraded undergraduate program and elimination of the Ph.D. degree. Contains an index. (GLR)

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